Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

August 11, 2011

The Honorable Jeb Hensarling
129 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Hensarling:

As a newly-appointed member of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction created by the Budget Control Act (S.637), you will be tasked with developing recommendations and legislation to reduce our national deficit. While we support efforts to reduce wasteful government spending and developing long-term fiscally responsible polices, we remain concerned that your Committee essentially has the ability to craft a list of recommendations without any public input or an open process.

We ask you, as an appointee to the joint Committee, to ensure that all meetings and hearings are done in a transparent manner through advance public notification, public attendance, and live television broadcasts. Meetings will include any time a quorum of members are present to discuss Committee-related matters. All Americans should have the ability to see how the Committee crafts a concrete plan for our fiscal future. As authors of the Budget Control Joint Committee Transparency Act (S. 1501, H.R. 2796) we stand firm in our belief that the American public must understand the implications of your Committee's recommendations, which requires an open process rather than a series of closed-door meetings.

Every American, whether they are Republican, Democrat, or Independent, has ideas about reducing the deficit that deserve proper consideration and discussion. Given that all aspects of the federal budget could be subject to the Committee's recommendations, we believe that the American people have the right to see that process unfold. An open, transparent process is an essential step in achieving a fiscal plan that will put our nation on a path towards fiscal sustainability.

Committee members should conduct themselves in a transparent and accountable manner to the American public during the weeks ahead. We look forward to your response to this request.

Sincerely,

U.S. Senator Dean Heller

U.S. Representative Vern Buchanan